

ON FISA, PRESIDENT AND REPUBLICANS PLAY POLITICS WITH NATIONAL SECURITY

(Mr. BRALEY of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, while President Bush and congressional Republicans sit on the sideline demanding that this House rubber-stamp the Senate-passed FISA bill, House and Senate Democrats are doing exactly what's expected of us, working to iron out differences between different FISA bills passed earlier in the two Chambers.

Last November, the House passed the RESTORE Act that modernizes the FISA law by giving the intelligence community the tools it needs to track terrorists while protecting the constitutional rights of innocent Americans.

The Bush administration objects to our legislation because we oppose giving blanket immunity to telecommunications companies who turned over information about their customers. Today, our committees continue to review telecom documents so that we can ensure the companies' actions are thoroughly reviewed and they are held appropriately accountable.

Madam Speaker, despite the fear-mongering from the President, his own administration says the intelligence community still has access to all the information it did last month. We have time to get this critical legislation right, and that's exactly what we plan to do.

RESPONSIBLE SPENDING, NOT IRRESPONSIBLE TAX INCREASES

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the budget season is upon us. Today, the Budget Committee will meet to mark up the 2009 budget resolution.

With a new year and new opportunity, I hope the majority does not resort to the Big Government policies of the past. That means no more tax increases for hardworking Americans. Taxpayers already pay enough out of their pockets to fund the Washington bureaucracy. They should not be asked to fork over more money to subsidize billions of dollars in new wasteful government spending.

Republicans and Democrats need to craft a budget that accurately reflects the needs of the American people, honors our obligation to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, and above all, takes a realistic and proactive approach to reining in runaway entitlement spending. Future generations should not be forced to pay the price while the leadership here in Washington refuses to make the tough decisions.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

A NEW DIRECTION IN IRAQ

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's vitriolic, anti-American, Holocaust-denying leader, just concluded the first ever trip to Iraq by an Iranian President. Many commentators in the Middle East hailed the visit as a diplomatic success for him. Before our invasion, no Iranian President would have dared to step foot inside Iraq. He was received by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki not with one, but four kisses for luck at a staged press conference with Iraqi media.

I quote Ahmadinejad: "The Americans have to understand the facts of the region. Iraqi people do not like America."

After 6 years in Iraq, 4,000 American lives lost, tens of thousands wounded, and \$570 billion spent, this is what we have to show for it? Iran's anti-American leader being given the opportunity to try to humiliate us at a joint press conference with Iraq's leader?

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing the fruition of our strategic blunder in Iraq. The groundwork has been laid for a Shiite-dominated Iraqi theocracy, loyal to Iran and diametrically opposed to our strategic interests in the region. We can stay this course or chart a new direction that will end this failed policy and bring our troops home.

It's about time we chose a direction that is worthy of the patriotism of our troops and the sacrifices of their families.

FREEDOM IS WINNING IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I got a sense of what we have to show for it in Iraq this weekend. I joined a bipartisan delegation that toured the metes and bounds of Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the course of 4 days, we took off and landed 20 different times in four different types of aircraft. The one inescapable conclusion, after years of difficulty and setback in varying degrees, is freedom is winning in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In northern Iraq, we saw firsthand the Kurdish region where security, political progress and economic growth are taking hold. In central Iraq, following the military surge, al Qaeda and insurgent violence are in steep decline. Violence across the country has been reduced in the last year by more than 60 percent. It is truly extraordinary.

And the political progress is taking hold. There has been a surge in opti-

mism in Iraq due to the passage of a de-Ba'athification law, and provincial elections could well be just around the corner this fall.

Later today, in words and pictures, I will detail our trip on my Web log at mikepence.house.gov. And I hope many of my constituents will take time to read it.

As we practice freedom here at home, Americans of good will should be encouraged to know freedom is winning in Iraq and Afghanistan.

PAUL WELLSTONE MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION EQUITY ACT

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my support for the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act.

At the heart of this bill is the fact that there exists an unreasonable difference in the way society treats mental health conditions as opposed to all other health conditions. There are quite a few health professionals in Congress, and to all of us there is no distinction in the necessity of treating heart disease, bone disease, or mental health disease. They are all equally vital to our body's functioning, and that is our goal in this act.

We must finally put an end to the discrimination being practiced by insurers and others when they offer health coverage for some health conditions and not others. It's not fair to say we'll cover some parts of your health care, but we'll pick and choose which parts of your body to cover. That's bad for business. I know it's bad for health care.

I commend PATRICK KENNEDY and JIM RAMSTAD for their tireless work on this bill and seeing its coming to the floor. I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this excellent legislation.

LET AMERICANS KEEP THEIR OWN MONEY

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, it's springtime in the city, but the trees and flowers aren't the only things growing in Washington. Federal spending is going to grow as well because springtime means Federal budget time, and this year the American taxpayer may be asked to finance the largest budget in U.S. history.

Now, in order to pay for all these expensive pigs and piglets, the government has to find a way to raise money. One option is to borrow the money. Why don't we just borrow it from the Chinese like we did in the past. Or just go into deficit spending. Or Congress can raise taxes. Yes, that's right, tax